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DE RUEHGB #1305 1181543  
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P 271543Z APR 08  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7058  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 001305

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/27/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: THE LAST DAYS OF A STATE MINISTRY

Classified By: Deputy PolCouns Ellen Germain for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: In a April 27 meeting with PolOffs, members of the Ministry of State for Women's Affairs (MoSWA) expressed their overwhelming frustrating with the lack of support the Ministry is receiving since the Prime Minister's Office made the informal decision to eliminate the organization in its upcoming cabinet reshuffle. Although MoSWA is still carrying on as many programs as it can handle, the Council of Ministers (COM) and its leadership has refused to hire new employees for MoWSA to replace the 50 percent of the staff that has already departed. The staff pleaded with PolOffs to offer any assistance the Embassy could provide. End Summary

12. (C) Visibly upset, Jawan Akram Amin, the Director for Public Affairs and Media for MoSWA, highlighted the staffing problems that the Ministry faced in the past few months. With only an Acting Minister (Narmeen Othman, Minister of Science and Environment), personnel transfers and departures have left the Ministry with only about half of its 13 staffing positions, some of which are contractors who are threatening to leave because of low pay and long hours. Additionally, the Ministry has no vehicle or driver to support its programs, nor does it have a translator. Requests to the CoM Deputy Secretary General Dr. Farhad for additional staffing have only resulted in offers for future contract workers; direct hires would likely leave suddenly because of security reasons, according to Farhad. Jawan asserted that this slow death of the Ministry was a result of PM Maliki's decision to eliminate all of the Ministries of State in his upcoming cabinet reshuffle. (Note: Jawan placed all of her frustration and the blame for the premature dismantling on Dr. Farhad; at one point, normally very reserved, she made it clear to PolOffs that she thought he was a "retarded man" with a "retarded perspective" who came from a "retarded northern tribe." End Note.)

13. (C) Staffing and resource shortages aside, Jawan detailed a very active set of programs that the Ministry was running, including planning for a housing project for 15,000 widows; an information campaign to explain the rights of women codified within the Iraqi Constitution; and a study of the increase in prostitution among the Iraqi women who fled to Syria. She also highlighted a major breast cancer campaign that she was organizing by forming a committee that included members of the Ministries of Health and Education, along with parliamentarians. Already her efforts have produced a brochure on breast cancer self-examinations that was approved for distribution by the marja'iyah; she plans to distribute the pamphlets to primary school students to deliver to their mothers when funding becomes available. She also recently concluded surveys within Baghdad and Kirkuk that indicate a low rate of breast cancer awareness within the populations sampled.

14. (C) Concluding the meeting, Jawan pleaded with PolOffs to offer any support Post could muster, especially concerning the shortage of staffing. She reiterated that many of the

staff were pulling 'triple duty', pointing out another staff member who acted as secretary, technology coordinator, and translator for the Ministry. She lamented the position of the GOI which, in her opinion, was now acting to dismiss the Ministry and the role of women within Iraq.

15. (C) Comment: Although the elimination of the Ministries of State is likely inevitable, the MoSWA is notable because it actually accomplishes programming without an operating budget. This is, in no small part, a credit to the women like Jawan who spend many hours networking and expending their own resources. Due to her single-handed work to build a breast cancer campaign and the obstacles she has already overcome in her efforts, Post will nominate Jawan for the upcoming IVLP on Breast Cancer Awareness and Outreach. End Comment.

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